

Caso, crew top of the class

Duxbury native wins at Marion-Bermuda yacht race

By Joe Reardon
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David Caso and his five-member crew had all they could handle to battle the array of elements they went up against in June's Marion to Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race.

The 645-mile race was a sharp contrast to the 2007 event where the Duxbury sailor was the event's overall winner. This time around, Caso and his crew of Sam and Ned Lawson, Keith Pratt, and Terry Watson used their guile and years of experience to capture the Class D division on board the Cherubini 44 Silhouette. As winners of the Class D division, Caso and his crew earned the Joel B. Sykes Memorial Trophy. They finished the race in 4 days, 17 hours, 37 minutes, and 22 seconds, eighth place overall. The winner of the race, Crescendo, skippered by Martin Jacobson, arrived in Bermuda in 3 days, 23 hours, 55 minutes, and 18 seconds.

Constant changes in sea conditions and weather forced many boats to drop out, but Caso, who has been sailing since the age of 12, had other ideas.

"We wanted to go as westerly as we could," Caso explained. "Then we wanted to go south-

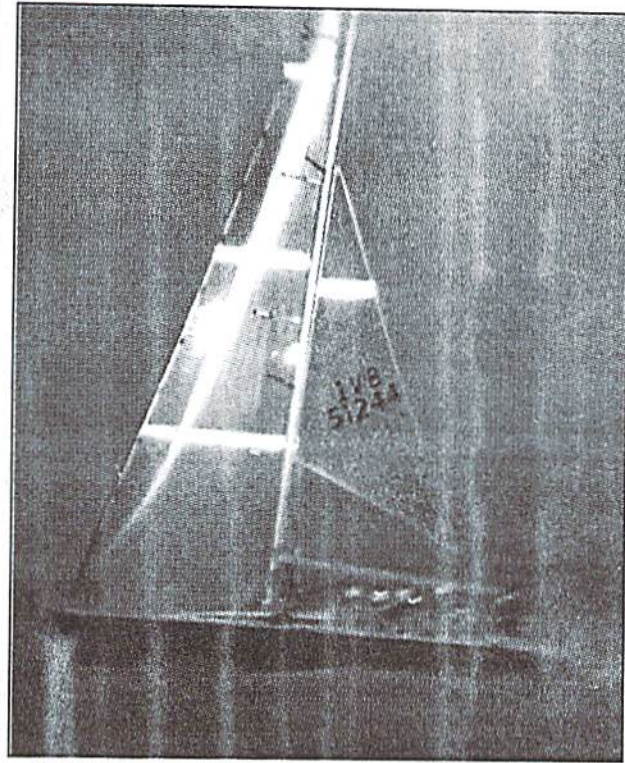
west of the island, so we'd be ready when the winds changed. The gulf stream current and wind direction were key."

Caso's move panned out in the end. The yacht averaged six knots overall, and its speed would jump to 14 knots when it engaged waves up to 25-feet high.

The weather in this year's race turned the competition into a battle of attrition. There were times when the water was still and the doldrums left crews having to make up precious time. Over the four-day race, strong winds and waves made an appearance as well, keeping crews on high alert as they fought to reach Bermuda.

"We had everything except snow," said Caso, who believes the experience of his entire crew made the difference in capturing the Class D division. "We knew we were in good shape because we could follow the race on the computer. But the way the weather was, it was difficult to catch the faster boats."

Caso's win came on the heels of a third-place finish this past winter in a Miami to Nassau competition. The Marion to Bermuda race, which is held every two years, will more than likely draw Caso back in 2011. Next year, he'll compete in the



Crescendo (pictured here), skippered by Martin Jacobson, won the 2009 Marion to Bermuda Cruising Yacht Race, while Duxbury's David Caso and his crew came in eighth overall and first in the Class D division.

prestigious Newport event.

Because of the weather and the crew being forced to hit the winds and currents just right, Caso said his yacht traveled nearly 100 miles more than the 645-mile distance. By the time they reached the finish line, 730

miles had been logged on the water.

The rough conditions fail to deter Caso, however. He'll be back looking for his second overall title. "Definitely in two years," he said of the Marion to Bermuda test.